

DETACHABLE FLUID TREATMENT APPLICATOR

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of the prior filed, co-pending provisional application, Serial No. 60/433,639, filed December 16, 2002.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates to the field of applicators for applying fluid treatments such as paint, stain, varnish and the like and particularly to applicators including elongated handles and detachable applicator pads.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Various devices are provided in the prior art for applying paint, stain, varnish and similar fluid treatments. Application of such treatments is typically accomplished by either spraying a surface with droplets of the fluid or by transferring the fluid from an applicator such as a brush or roller. While spraying can cover large areas in a short amount of time, it can be extremely wasteful. Large amounts of the treatment fluid may be carried away by wind or deposited on areas not intended for treatment. Application by brush or roller is more directed to the intended treatment area but can be difficult when the user is presented with complex surfaces.

(Docket 3372)

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] A device for applying treatment fluid such as paint, stain, varnish or the like including an elongated handle having an applicator pad attached to one end. The pad is typically dipped into a container of treatment fluid to load the pad. Excess fluid may be removed from the pad by pressing it against the inside wall of the container. The elongated handle is then gripped by the user while the pad is drawn over surfaces to be treated. Due to the elongated handle, application may be performed while minimizing the need for the user to bend and kneel. In addition, the user's reach is generally increased relative to an ordinary brush or roller.

[0005] The portion of the device bearing the applicator pad may be dislocated or detached from the rest of the handle by breaking the handle along a line or zone of fracture. The zone of fracture typically comprises a scored or perforated notch cut transversely across the handle near the applicator pad. A knob is provided for attachment at the applicator pad after the pad is detached from the handle. The knob provides a means for the user to grip the applicator pad during application of treatment fluid. Prior to detaching the applicator pad from the handle, the device is particularly well-adapted to application of treatment fluid such as paint, stain, varnish or the like to narrow vertical surfaces such as railing spindles or to surfaces that would otherwise be out of reach. The detached applicator pad is particularly well-adapted to application of treatment fluid to the tops of handrails or broad horizontal surfaces.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] Fig. 1 is a frontal and side perspective view of a fluid treatment applicator in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0007] Fig. 2 is a plan view of the applicator of Fig. 1.

[0008] Fig. 3 is a side elevational view of the applicator.

[0009] Fig. 4 is a rear end view of the applicator.

[0010] Fig. 5 is a front end view of the applicator.

[0011] Fig. 6 is a plan view of the applicator of Fig. 1 showing the applicator portion detached from the gripping portion of the handle and the knob transferred from the gripping portion of the handle to the applicator portion.

[0012] Fig. 7 is a side elevational view of the applicator of Fig. 6 with the portion of the handle inside the applicator pad, as well as the knob, drawn in phantom lines.

[0013] Fig. 8 is a diagram showing an applicator positioned for breakage along the fracture zone of the handle.

[0014] Fig. 9 is a diagram showing the applicator of Fig. 8, with the applicator portion separated from the gripping portion by breakage along the fracture zone of the handle.

[0015] Fig. 10 is a partial exploded view of the knob, applicator portion, and screw.

[0016] Fig. 11 is a side view diagram showing insertion of the applicator into a typical container of treatment fluid.

[0017] Fig. 12 is a top view diagram indicating preferred clearance of the applicator portion from the sides of the opening of the fluid container.

[0018] Fig. 13 is an environmental view of the applicator being used to apply treatment fluid to a spindle of a deck railing, as well as a view of a detached applicator portion resting upon a horizontal handrail of a deck railing.

[0019] Fig. 14 is a plan view of the applicator illustrating a fracture zone defined by a series of perforations, detents or holes in the handle.

[0020] Fig. 15 is a plan view of the applicator illustrating a fracture zone defined by a single hole in the handle.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0021] Referring now to the drawings, and initially in particular to Figs. 1-5, wherein like reference numerals indicate like parts throughout the several views, an applicator device 100 for applying fluid such as paint, stain, varnish or the like is illustrated and includes an elongated handle 102 having an applicator pad 104 on the proximate end of the handle 102. The distal or opposing end of the handle 102 forms or includes a primary grip or gripping element 106. The applicator pad 104 is formed of fluid-retaining material for transferring fluid from the device 100 to a surface to be treated. Appropriate fluid-retaining material includes sheep or lamb wool with leather backing, synthetic material such as foam rubber, and/or fabric. Fig. 4 illustrates the applicator 100 of Fig. 1 as viewed in elevation from the distal end. Fig. 5 illustrates the applicator 100 of Fig. 1 as viewed in elevation from the proximate end. The applicator pad material may be attached to the handle 102 using staples (not shown) or other appropriate means.

[0022] The handle 102 may be formed from a paint stick or paddle and may comprise wood or plastic. The handle 102 includes a substantially transverse zone of fracture 108 (see Fig. 2) which defines the boundary between the primary gripping portion 110 of the device 100 and the detachable applicator portion 112. As illustrated, this fracture zone 108 comprises transverse scores or notches 108a and 108b on the top 102a and bottom 102b surfaces of the handle (see Fig. 3). A fracture zone 108 may also be created through use of perforations, detents or one or more holes (see 108c and 108d, Figs. 14 and 15). The handle 102 may be broken at the fracture zone 108 to detach the applicator portion 112 from the primary gripping portion 110. Figs. 6 and 7 show the handle 102 broken into piece 102c, associated with the primary gripping

portion 110 of the device 100, and piece 102d, associated with the applicator portion 112 of the device 100.

[0023] A secondary grip or gripping element 114 is provided for attachment to the applicator portion 112. As illustrated, the secondary grip 114 may comprise a rounded wooden knob 114. The knob 114 may be attached to the applicator portion 112 by passing a screw 116 or other suitable attachment device through a hole 118 in the applicator portion 112 and then into the underside of the knob 114. Fig. 10 illustrates in exploded view the engagement of the knob 114 and screw 116 with the applicator portion 112, including a remaining length of handle 102d protruding from the applicator pad 104.

[0024] As shown in Figs. 1 through 3, the knob 114 may be retained on the handle 102 until required after detachment of the applicator portion 112 from the primary gripping portion 110. Figs. 6 and 7 show a top plan view and side elevational view, respectively, of the device 100 with the applicator portion 112 detached from the primary gripping portion 110, and the knob 114 transferred from storage on the primary gripping portion 110 to engagement with the applicator portion 112.

[0025] Figs. 8 and 9 are diagrams illustrating the separation or detachment of the application portion 112 from the primary gripping portion 110. In Fig. 8, the device 100 has been laid upon a stable horizontal surface such as a deck rail 150 such that the fracture zone 108 lies across the corner edge of the rail 150. Force (as indicated by arrow 120) is applied to the primary gripping portion 110 to hold the device 100 in place. Additional force (as indicated by arrow 125) is applied to the applicator portion 112. Upon application of sufficient force 125 the

handle 102 is broken proximate to the fracture zone 108 thereby separating the applicator portion 112 from the primary gripping portion 110.

[0026] Fig. 11 is a side view sectional diagram showing insertion of the device 100 into a typical container of treatment fluid such as a paint can 200. Preferably the fluid level 210 in the container 200 is maintained so as to allow complete immersion of the applicator pad 104. Fig. 12 is a top view diagram indicating preferred minimal clearance of the detached applicator portion 112 from the interior sides 202 of the opening of the fluid container 200.

[0027] Fig. 13 is an environmental view of the device 100 being used to apply treatment fluid such as stain to a spindle 304 of a deck railing 300, as well as a view of a detached applicator portion 112 resting upon a horizontal handrail portion 302 of a deck railing 300.

[0028] A surface may be treated with a fluid such as paint, stain, varnish or the like using a device 100 presenting an embodiment of the invention by providing an elongated handle 102 having an applicator pad 104 attached to the applicator portion 112 of the handle, the opposing end of the handle serving as a primary gripping element 110. The applicator pad 104 is may then be loaded with selected treatment fluid and the fluid transferred from the applicator pad 104 to a selected surface such as a vertical spindle 304 by wiping the applicator pad 104 across the surface. When it is desired to use only the applicator portion 112, the handle 102 may be broken along a substantially transverse zone of fracture 108 located between the primary gripping portion 110 and the applicator pad 104 to detach the applicator pad 104 from the primary gripping portion 110. A secondary gripping element such as knob 114 may then be

detached from the primary gripping portion 110 and attached to the applicator portion 112. Fluid may then be transferred from the applicator pad 104 to the selected surface by wiping the applicator pad 104 across the surface.

[0029] It is to be understood that while certain forms of this invention have been illustrated and described, it is not limited thereto except insofar as such limitations are included in the following claims and allowable equivalents thereof.